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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2024
TAGS: KNNP AORC IAEA IR
SUBJECT: IAEA/IRAN: SAFEGUARDS TECHNICAL BRIEFING STRESSES
STATUS QUO: NO NEW COOPERATION FROM IRAN

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Geoffrey Pyatt for reasons 1.4(b
) and (d)

Summary

¶1. (SBU) On June 10, Ops B Director Herman Nackaerts provided Member States a technical briefing on the Director General's (DG) June 5 report on Iran. The briefing largely repeated the points covered in the report, but also offered more details on safeguards implementation at the Natanz centrifuge complex. Nackaerts restated that Iran has not offered any cooperation on possible military dimensions (PMD), has not suspended enrichment- and heavy water-related activities, has not implemented the Additional Protocol (AP) or Code 3.1 (early provision of design information for nuclear facilities), and has not provided design information verification (DIV) access to the IR-40 Heavy Water Research Reactor at Arak as required under Iran's Safeguards Agreement.

¶2. (SBU) Several questions were asked during the question and answer session about the containment and surveillance measures at Natanz, Iran's cooperation on PMD issues, and uranium conversion operations. Iran again used this opportunity to claim it was cooperating with the IAEA as required by its comprehensive safeguards agreement and to criticize the IAEA's handling of the investigation. End Summary.

Safeguards Implementation at Natanz

¶3. (SBU) While summarizing Iran's centrifuge cascade operations at both the Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) and Pilot FEP (PFEP) at Natanz-which included the same information as contained in the DG's June 5 report-Nackaerts noted that the number of centrifuges in operation was based on the assumption that 164 centrifuge machines were actually operating in each cascade, since the IAEA does not have any information on "crashed" or nonfunctioning machines (see septel for more details on such machines). Nackaerts also noted that all the low enriched uranium material-both product and tails-from the PFEP operations, which involved single centrifuges and small cascades, were being recombined and generally recycled as feed material.

¶4. (SBU) In addition, Nackaerts noted that there were three current implementation issues for the Natanz centrifuge complex-the need for improvements to the operator's nuclear material accountancy system, the need to strengthen containment and surveillance measures because of the increasing centrifuge numbers, and the need to ensure unannounced inspection objectives can be met at all times (notwithstanding Iran's security drills)-all of which

currently were under discussion with the Iranians. Nackaerts described Safeguards Implementation at both the FEP and PFEP as involving containment and surveillance over unclear material cylinders, centrifuge cascade areas, and feed and withdrawal areas. Nackaerts said the current safeguards approach includes monthly nuclear material balancing; calibration and use of load cells; unannounced access to all plant areas; surveillance of feed and withdrawal areas, passivation areas, and cascade areas; sealing of cylinders and autoclaves; regular environmental sampling for new and installed centrifuges; one-physical inventory verification (PIV), twelve interim inventory verification/design information verification (IIV/DIV), and twelve-unannounced inspections per year; as well as destructive and nondestructive analysis of all cylinders containing nuclear material according to a sampling plan.

Fuel for the IR-40

¶5. (SBU) Nackaerts reported that process lines for the production of fuel elements at the Fuel Manufacturing Plant (FMP) at Esfahan were complete, and that the IAEA had verified the fuel assembly that Iran displayed during the National Nuclear Day in April. He said that Iran has produced a total of 23 fuel rods to date, of which 18 were used in the fuel assembly.

Nothing New on Possible Military Dimensions (PMD)

¶6. (SBU) Nackaerts reiterated that no/no progress had been made on PMD issues and that Iran needs to provide substantive information, and access to relevant documentation, locations, and individuals. Noting that Iran has had sufficient access to the documentation regarding weaponization-related activities, Nackaerts also repeated the DG's call on Member States to work out new modalities with the IAEA so that copies of the documentation can be provided to Iran. He said the next steps for dealing with PMD issues are for Iran to answer all outstanding questions simultaneously and not in a piecemeal fashion.

Questions and Answers

¶7. (SBU) After Nackaerts' presentation, Germany, France, the U.K., the U.S., and Albania asked questions. Iran made its usual claim that it had cooperated with the IAEA and lived up to all of its obligations. Germany asked if the IAEA had access to Hall B at the FEP in Natanz; what the enrichment level was for the LEU product at the PFEP; for a description of the IAEA's discussions with Iran on the "three current implementation issues" as noted in the briefing, especially if Iran was cooperating; and if any progress had been made with the plan that the IAEA spelled out in the September 2008 DG's report for dealing with the PMD issues. Nackaerts replied that inspectors do have access to Hall B, but that there is nothing there yet to inspect; the uranium fed into centrifuges at PFEP (both product and tails) is recombined and sometimes re-fed, and that the IAEA does not know the current enrichment levels for the product at the PFEP. (Comment: Mission assumes the enrichment levels are very low, at most 5 percent or below, otherwise IAEA environmental sampling would reveal higher-level enrichment.)
Nackaerts also said that some additional containment and surveillance measures the IAEA has recommended for Natanz are already in place, and others are still being worked out, but that Iran is cooperating so far. He stressed again that there has been no progress with anything related to PMD for approximately the last year.

¶8. (SBU) France asked if Iran had provided any additional information on PMD issues that are not particularly "military sensitive", such as its conventional work-airbags-with exploding bridge wires (EBW); and if it was "unusual" for a country to use low enriched uranium (LEU) as targets for irradiation (for radioisotope production). Nackaerts responded that Iran has not provided any additional information about work with EBWs, and that the IAEA wants to deal with all PMD issues simultaneously, and not in a "one-at-a-time fashion" as before under the previous IAEA-Iran "work plan." Nackaerts said the IAEA requested additional from Iran as to why it was irradiating targets using LEU, and is fully satisfied with Iran's response; the IAEA accepts Iran's view that one can achieve better results for these experiments by irradiating LEU targets. Responding to France's question about the total amount of uranium hexafluoride (UF6) produced at the Uranium Conversion Facility (UCF) at Esfahan and how much material had been moved to Natanz, Nackaerts said the IAEA will report the exact numbers once the IAEA has the final results from the last PIV.

¶9. (C) The U.K. asked if there had been any other problems or issues with unannounced inspections at Natanz, other than the already reported issue arising from an unannounced inspection request during a security drill. Nackaerts replied that there had been no other problems and had received good cooperation from the Iranians. (Comment: A UK Msnoff privately told UNVIE Msnoff that he had been told that Iran had caused trouble on another unannounced inspection, but did not have any more specifics. In a separate conversation, DDG/Safeguards Heinonen said he was not particularly concerned about the security drill issue and said he thought it could have been better handled by his own team in a way that preserved the integrity of the inspection while not generating a "fuss" with Iran.). Following up on Germany's question about the Containment and Surveillance measures at Natanz, the U.S. asked how the IAEA monitors centrifuge machines, rotors, and other equipment that breaks down at Natanz, especially in light of the fact that centrifuge numbers continue to grow (and by implication so does the number of failed machines). The U.S. asked what happens to this equipment, where it goes, and how it is monitored. Nackaerts said that all centrifuge machines in contact with UF6 have to be accounted for and remain under Safeguards. He reported that there is a storage place in

Natanz where such items go until they are dismantled and decontaminated, but once the dismantlement and decontamination take place, the IAEA does not know where the items go, and where/if they are reused in any way. The U.S. also asked if Iran has moved any domestically produced yellowcake to the UCF or notified the IAEA of its intention to do so. Nackaerts replied that he has no additional information regarding use of domestic uranium resources, except for the couple of very small samples that had been brought to the UCF for laboratory testing and analysis some time ago.

¶10. (SBU) Albania asked if Iran had provided the IAEA with any new design information, fuel loading system information, or start-up dates for the IR-40 reactor, especially since Iran has completed a fuel assembly at the FMP. Nackaerts responded that the last information the IAEA received from Iran about the IR-40 was in January 2007. At that time Iran claimed a start-up date of 2013 and included design drawings and flow charts, but nothing on fuel assembly procedures and equipment.

Iran's Speeches and Interjections

¶11. (C) Iranian Ambassador Soltanieh spoke last after the

Member States had asked their questions. Echoing past themes, his statement asserted that the IAEA did not need access to the IR-40 reactor, the IAEA has not lived up to its part of the 2007 Work Plan on PMD/Alleged Studies issues because Iran has not been provided copies of documentation, and that it was unacceptable that the IAEA wants access to military people and top secret information on its ballistic missile program. DDG Safeguards Olli Heinonen responded to Soltanieh's speech, stating the IAEA does not agree with his comments and provided specific examples of how Iran has caused this investigation process to drag out over the past year. Ambassador Soltanieh repeated that the "laptop" was a fabrication, criticized IAEA official Chris Hutchinson by name (claiming he does not have the appropriate expertise and makes inapprorpriate, non-nuclear-related inquiries), and declared the IAEA's insistence on access to Top Secret Military information was damaging the IAEA's relationship with Iran. (Comment: Heinonen, Nackaerts, and Ops B Section Head Max Aparo did not attempt to hide their disdain for Soltanieh's comments during his speech; they grinned, shook heads, and rolled eyes.)
SCHULTE